

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 AMMAN 03222 091516Z
ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5691

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 3222

STADIS////////////////////////////////

FOR NEA/ATHERTON AND INR/SAUNDERS FROM PICKERING

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, JO, SS
SUBJECT: DEFECTIVE TOW MISSILES

1. WE HAVE BEEN TRYING FOR QUITE SOME TIME TO RESOLVE A SENSITIVE PROBLEM INVOLVING TOW MISSILES PROVIDED UNDER GRANT AID TO JORDAN. THE PROBLEM, DISCOVERED IN 1975, MAY AFFECT MORE THAN 50 PCT. OF ALL THE TOW MISSILES FURNISHED TO JORDAN, I.E., OVER 600 MISSILES. BY THE U.S. ARMY'S OWN ADMISSION CERTAIN LOTS OF TOW AMMUNITION CONTAIN A KNOWN MANUFACTURING DEFECT WHICH MAY CAUSE AN INTERNAL COMPONENT (ACTUATOR BOTTLE) TO BURST WHILE IN STORAGE. GOJ SUSPECTS ALL MISSILES IN THESE LOTS AND IS AFRAID TO ISSUE THEM TO UNITS FOR FEAR THAT THE DEFECT WILL SHOW UP LATER. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CLAIMS THAT ONLY THOSE MISSILES WHICH EXHIBIT THE DEFECT (EVIDENCED BY A RUPTURED DIAPHRAGM) ARE FAULTY, AND THAT THE OTHER MISSILES IN THE SAME LOT CAN BE FIRED, ALTHOUGH THEY NEED TO BE MONITORED IN CASE THEY HAVE DEFECTIVE BOTTLES TOO. IN AN EFFORT TO CORRECT THIS SITUATION, THE EMBASSY HAD PROPOSED THAT MISSILES EXHIBITING THE DEFECT BE EXCHANGED ON A ONE FOR ONE BASIS W/O CHARGE, FOR AS LONG AS THESE LOT'S OF AMMO EXIST, IF IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO REPLACE THE ENTIRE LOTS WHICH CONTAIN DEFECTIVE OR POTENTIALLY DEFECTIVE BOTTLES.

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2. WE HAVE REACHED AN IMPASSE WITH THE RECEIPT OF STATE 072865 WHICH SAYS, INTER ALIA, THAT "U.S. ARMY HAS DETERMINED THAT IT IS PROHIBITED BY LAW FROM USING ANY FUNDS OTHER THAN THOSE APPROPRIATED FOR MAP FOR JORDAN TO REPLACE JORDAN'S MAP-SUPPLIED DEFECTIVE TOW MISSILES." WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THIS LATEST MESSAGE WITH GOJ. I DO NOT THINK IT IS A SATISFACTORY

REPLY GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH JORDAN, AND PARTICULARLY AT A TIME WHEN THE KING IS ALREADY DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER USG RESPONSIVENESS TO HIS MILITARY NEEDS. I AM SURE THAT THE PROBLEM WILL COME TO THE ATTENTION OF KING HUSSEIN IF IT HAS NOT ALREADY, AND THAT IT WILL ADD ANOTHER UNNECESSARY POLITICAL AND MILITARY IRRITANT TO USG-JORDANIAN RELATIONSHIPS.

3. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF THIS PROBLEM COULD BE REVIEWED AGAIN, WITH A PUSH FROM YOUR LEVEL, TO SEE IF WE CANNOT COME UP WITH A BETTER ANSWER TO RESOLVING THE DIFFICULTY. IF LEGAL DIFFICULTIES DO PRECLUDE OUR REPLACING THE DEFECTIVE MISSILES OUT OF U.S. ARMY OR DOD FUNDS--IT WOULD SEEM UNUSUAL FOR OUR ARMY TO ABSORB FAULTY MISSILES WITHOUT GOING BACK TO THE MANUFACTURER--THEN I PROPOSE THAT THE 1979 GRANT AID PROGRAM BE INCREASED SUFFICIENTLY TO COVER THE PROVIDING TO JORDAN OF A NUMBER OF REPLACEMENT TOW MISSILES EQUAL TO THE NUMBER CONTAINED IN THE SUSPECT LOTS OF AMMUNITION (648 MSLS). BASED ON MAP PRICING AVAIL HERE THIS WOULD BE AN INCREASE OF ABOUT \$2.6M. JAF HAS NOT BEEN MADE AWARE OF THIS PROPOSAL. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THIS WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO MAKE THIS GESTURE TO JORDAN. THIS COULD BE DONE UNDER EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY TO INCREASE MAP FUNDS FOR ANY GIVEN COUNTRY UP TO 10 PCT. (SECT 504A OF AECA). WE ASSUME THAT BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE THERE WILL BE SUFFICIENT MAP RECOUPMENTS OR OTHER FUNDS FOR REALLOCATION TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR SUCH A WELL JUSTIFIED CASE AND THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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JORDAN FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD RECEIVE TOP PRIORITY ON RECOUPMENTS AND REALLOCATIONS.
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